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*Human Rights Violation in  
Uganda Under Obote*  
BY DR. JUSEF LULE

November 1982

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## PREFACE

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The author of this issue, Professor Yusuf Lule, did not seek, but certainly found, a significant role in the history of Uganda. After taking his BSc at Fort Hare College, and his second degree at the University of Edinburgh in 1951, he appeared destined for a career of scholarship. But Sir Andrew Cohen, then colonial Governor of Uganda, was anxious to Africanize the country rapidly and to get independent men of standing in the pre-independence cabinet.

Like many Baganda, Professor Lule has impeccable manners, and looks every inch the gentleman in his blue pin-stripe suit. I first noticed this characteristic in the Baganda on meeting Kabaka Edward Mutesa when he was still the monarch of Buganda. There is a quiet dignity that makes many short-statured Baganda seem much taller.

After serving as Minister of Education in the colonial government, from 1954 to 1961, Lule moved on to become chairman of the Public Service Commission from 1961 to 1964, and then to become Principal of Makerere University. Makerere was possibly the finest of the colonial universities, although Fourah Bay in Sierra Leone was much older, Ibadan had a larger faculty, the University of Ghana moved more rapidly, and Dakar had closer ties with the European intellectual community. Until 1970 it was Makerere College, one of the three constituent colleges of the University of East Africa. The other two were the University College of Nairobi and the University College of Dar-es-Salaam. The break-up of University of East Africa was a sign of the growth of its separate colleges but also something of a retreat from the ideal of East African unity. Lule deserves much credit for the eminence of Makerere. He was forced out of his Makerere post by the then President Milton Obote in 1970. Subsequently, Lule was much praised as Assistant Secretary General at the Commonwealth Secretariat in London. He then became the first head of the Association of African Universities, with headquarters in Ghana.

But it was as the first President of Uganda for 69 days, in 1979, after the vicious Amin regime had been overthrown by Tanzanian troops and Ugandan guerrillas, that Lule gained worldwide attention. Some say that this quiet, scholarly, reflective university professor was outmaneuvered by the ambitious Obote, protégé of President Nyerere of Tanzania. Others say that given the circumstances Lule never had a chance, and that Obote's drive to regain power could not be thwarted. Personally, I doubt that, because Obote was and is highly unpopular in Uganda, especially in Buganda where most of the institutions and economic wealth of the country are concentrated.

When I was first on the staff at Makerere in 1949 as a Fulbright Scholar, Uganda had more University graduates than Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi, and Zambia combined! Uganda had the best prospects, next to Ghana, for success as a new nation if the problems of tribalism inherent in the country, and of

religious discord sown by the colonialists, were not to mar the dream of a happy and democratic Uganda. Thus the tragedy of Uganda was unexpected.

## UGANDA: CHRONOLOGY OF TOP LEADERS

Sir Andrew Cohen  
Governor of Uganda  
1952-1955

Sir Frederick Crawford  
Governor of Uganda  
1955-1960

Sir Walter Coutts  
Governor of Uganda  
1960-1962

Uganda became independent in 1962.

Sir Walter Coutts  
Governor General  
1962-1963

A. Milton Obote  
Prime Minister  
1962-1963

Sir Edward Mutesa  
Non-Executive President, Head of State  
1963-1966

A. Milton Obote  
Prime Minister  
1963-1966

A. Milton Obote  
Executive President, Head of State and Government  
1966-1971

Major General Idi Amin  
President  
1971-1979

Professor Yusuf Lule  
President  
April - June 1979

Godfrey Binaisa (Lawyer)  
President  
June 1979 - May 1980

Paulo Muwanga  
Chairman, Military Commission - (effectively President)  
May 1980 - December 1980

A. Milton Obote  
President  
Dec. 1980 -

Tragedy Act II began as the Amin regime crumbled. Professor Lule was elected to form a government at the conference of Ugandan exiles at Moshi in Tanzania. The conference was called in haste because the Tanzanian troops attacking Amin had stopped their advance to await the formation of a provisional government. President Nyerere wanted Obote. But his intelligence officials informed him of Obote's unpopularity in Uganda. Obote had been an albatross around the Tanzanian's neck since 1971, when he was welcomed into exile, and the Ugandan presidential flag was flown in Dar es Salaam. Tanzanians quietly criticized their country's financial support of the overthrown dictator. But Nyerere, with his immense personal popularity, rode out the storm.

Ninety Ugandans met at Moshi and elected Lule as Chairman of Uganda National Liberation Front. They formed themselves into four councils: an Executive Council, a Diplomatic Council, a Military Council, and a Consultative Council. At the insistence of the Tanzanians the Obote supporters, led by Muwanga and Oyite Ojok, controlled the Military Council.

So Nyerere countenanced the selection of Lule over Obote's man Paulo Muwanga (now Vice President of Uganda) as being necessary for Ugandan unity. Dr. Lule says that after this he met Obote twice. "The second time was at a neutral and secret meeting place in Dar es Salaam. We met for four hours and could not agree on actions to be taken. At the end of that period, Obote had consumed a whole bottle of brandy and was not able to understand what I was saying. So I left."

Dr. Lule says that he felt at all times that President Nyerere was exercising a final veto, with Ex-President Obote maneuvering behind the scenes. For example, at a meeting at Mwanza, on the south shore of lake Victoria, Obote insisted on being named Vice President and Nyerere made this one of his own goals. But Lule adamantly turned it down.

On the other hand, Lule felt compelled to accept Muwanga—an Obote man—as Minister of the Interior. Lule says somewhat ruefully today that Obote and Nyerere wanted Obote's supporters to hold five out of fifteen cabinet posts, "But I now realize that they were the key ones: foreign affairs, interior, defense, information, communications. When you control those, you control the government." Lule insisted, "I will be my own Minister of Defense." This was conceded by the Obote forces, but they insisted on having a compromise Deputy Minister of Defense and naming the Chief of Staff.

Secret State Department and British documents of that period stress that the compromises forced on Lule carried the seeds of his demise as President. Perhaps the two governments were constrained from taking a stronger stand behind Lule for the same reason that pressed on him: "Our goal was the overthrow of Amin. There was strong pressure for consensus. It would not have appeared seemly in world opinion for stories to appear that the Ugandan exiles were squabbling among themselves for what might appear to be personal power."

I asked Lule, "But if you knew that Nyerere wanted Obote in as President and only needed you as a unifying symbol for the first year, why didn't you take a stand sooner?"

"I accepted the cabinet on an interim basis. Once I got to Uganda, I shuffled my cabinet and brought in better people. In the 69 days, I tried to rectify the mistakes. For example, one of the roots of trouble in Uganda has been the recruitment of the army from only a few ethnic groups. The British had started this for their own reasons. But as soon as I was the President in Uganda, I ordered the recruitment of soldiers from all elements of the population to make it a national army. Nyerere and Obote immediately saw that their plan to seize power after a year might be thwarted. From that moment on Nyerere withdrew from me the support of the Tanzanian troops that controlled the country."

Lule found that almost every decision he made was required to go through President Nyerere's office. Meanwhile, Obote's supporters and other returned exiles were maneuvering for power. A vote of no confidence in Lule was passed by a 16-14 majority of the Consultative Council. The Council was an advisory body which had been formed at Moshi. Nyerere insisted that Lule must resign even though the Consultative Council had no legislative powers. (Indeed, the Ugandan High Court ruled, in October 1980, that Lule's removal had been unconstitutional.)

Lule called his brother in Nairobi and arranged for a plane to pick him up at Entebbe Airport, not far from the State House. Understandably, the Tanzanians found out and Nyerere phoned to insist that he would send a Tanzanian plane to fly Lule out of Uganda to Nairobi. When President Lule got to Entebbe Airport, he found that the plane was to take him to Dar es Salaam.

Perhaps Dr. Lule placed too much confidence in the international reputation of President Nyerere for fair play and justice. After all, Tanzania had expended its munitions and shed the blood of its soldiers to overthrow Amin. In the ten weeks that he was in power, Lule did exercise some freedom of action. He had considerable influence in the appointment of ambassadors, in securing the freedom of Makerere university from political manipulation, and in controlling arbitrary arrests. I heard of no torture or political killing during the Lule government. Shortly afterwards, I was in Kampala and spoke with Lule's successor, President Binaisa, as well as with influential Ugandans in and out of power. None faulted Lule for his rule.

"Did you feel you would be forcibly deposed from Uganda and taken by force if necessary to Dar?" I asked him over lunch recently in Pasadena.

"Yes, they controlled everything. I had no choice."

Once in Dar, Lule was treated well in a suite in the State House. He was allowed to keep his aide-de-camp and his telephone was open. Nyerere and others presented Lule with a series of documents. He was not only to abdicate the Presidency but to urge his followers to support his successor. The Tanzanian leadership was worried by the strength of Lule's following, especially among the Baganda.

"No, I will not sign," Lule told them resolutely, "I cannot betray 13 million Ugandans."

Then his telephone ceased to work for overseas calls. Alarmed, his wife and friends in England went to the medical officers at a London hospital. They went together to the press with the true story: Dr. Lule suffers from a blood disorder

which is not life-threatening but requires regular treatment if he is to live.

International pressure for Lule's release built up from the United States and Britain and from some African states for Lule's release. Lule says that Nyerere then ordered his phone to be free for calls to prove that nothing had happened to Lule in the period when no one heard from him.

Lule told his aide, "Don't answer any calls for me." Lule was deliberately allowing the pressure he sensed to mount still further. Finally Nyerere came to see him.

"Why don't you answer your phone? You are free to do as you wish."

The phone was free but Lule was cautious. Some of his guards had implied that dark deeds had been done and misfortune had befallen previous occupants at his suite. Finally, he had his aide telephone British Airways and book a flight direct to London. In Britain the word reached the press and, according to Lule, Nyerere had no choice but to let him go or to announce that the President of Uganda was a prisoner.

Once reunited with his family for a few days, Lule turned around and flew back to Nairobi, where he denounced President Nyerere and formed the elements of what is now the Uganda Resistance Movement.

Since then have come the Uganda elections of December 1980 and much fighting. Lule is highly critical of the Commonwealth Observer Group (COG) because they issued their much-publicized interim report stating that the voting had been relatively free and open, *before* the results of the polls had been announced. Lule says that their statement was premature. After the Commonwealth statement, Muwanga, contrary to his supposedly neutral role, intervened in the electoral affairs by suspending the announcement of a growing victory for the anti-Obote forces, and declaring a victory for Obote. Muwanga became Obote's Vice-President and Defense Minister. In Lule's view, it is not good enough to have a campaign (albeit a violent one), an open vote, a counting of the ballots, and then have most of the results simply reversed. Take the example of Dr. Martin Alier, the Democratic Party candidate in Gulu West. He was immensely popular among his Nilotic Acholi brethren. He was Presidential Advisor to both Lule and Binaisa, and one of two leaders that Nyerere and Obote had vetoed as cabinet ministers. After the ballots had been counted in Gulu, the Permanent Secretary — a close personal friend — called up Mrs. Alier in Nairobi to congratulate her on her husband's victory by 40,000 votes against only 3,000 for his opponent. The tide was running heavily toward the anti-Obote forces. Then Paulo Muwanga announced suspension of the results. There was immediate tension. When Radio Uganda came on the air the next day, the first announcement was that in Gulu, Dr. Martin Alier had been defeated by 40,000 to 3,000. The candidate so falsely announced as the winner refused to believe the results!

To reiterate a point: most of the ballots were correctly counted and this was certified to by the Commonwealth Commission. But then the labels were switched. Almost unbelievably, the *election observers left the country before the delayed results of the balloting were announced*. While this was convenient for those stealing the election, it did not help the credibility of the Commonwealth

observers. Their rationalization for accepting the results as finally announced was that the country needed stability and inasmuch as Obote's men controlled the army, not to certify his election would lead to civil war! But when the rigged results were announced in Uganda, thousands of ordinary voters raised an outcry. A civil war of resistance immediately broke out, with heavy loss of life. This publication is about that aftermath. Ignoring an evil act in the hope that it will be forgotten is pusillanimous piety.

Dr. Lule argues that the United States is condoning the use of force and that Britain's policy contradicts the principles for which she supposedly fought in the Falklands. While Thatcherites may agree as to the facts in Uganda they disagree on what to do about them. Britain does have a small cadre training the Uganda Army alongside of the larger North Korean force. In the long run Lule feels they will mix no better than chalk and cheese. The Lule argument goes beyond the UN call for the establishment of peace because:

"Simply to train an army to be disciplined and to carry out orders is not democracy. Hitler's army was well trained and followed orders. To stress stability above all else is to sacrifice democratic principles. A disciplined army enforcing tyrannical rule is worse than the terror of an undisciplined army, and much harder to overthrow."

Both Great Britain and the United States have been severely criticized for their laissez-faire attitude toward the murderous Amin regime until near the end. After atrocities, highlighted in world view by the Israeli raid on Entebbe, became more odious, the two countries acted. The United States refused to buy Uganda's coffee and Britain adopted a stronger stand. But these actions came after more than 100,000 people had been murdered. Many African countries also failed to set against Amin. It is a stain on the record of the Organization of African Unity that it elected Amin as its head during the height of his reign of terror. The OAU actually held a meeting in the Kampala Conference Center, from which one can see the Kololo hillside on which Amin's secret police had a torture chamber.

What is tragic is that both the British and American governments again appear to be sanctioning oppression. As a result, the Ugandan economy has continued to deteriorate, in spite of a ten-fold devaluation of the currency and other economic measures which Obote implemented as preconditions for aid from the IMF and the World Bank. But the Thatcher and Reagan Administrations seem to countenance the Obote regime. Although the rationalization is to prevent civil war, the killing continues. The position of Makerere University is worse today than it was under Amin. Its medical accreditation has finally been withdrawn by the British Medical Council. The recent beating and threatened execution of *Los Angeles Times* correspondent Charles Powers in May 1982 is part of a pattern.

In this issue, Dr. Lule argues the case as he sees it for the Uganda Resistance Movement. His argument is historically important, whether or not it influences the future course of action. These *Notes* have often opened the pages to criticisms of established government when change looked all but impossible. But Equatorial Guinea has changed. So has Angola. So too has Zimbabwe. So in

many ways have South Africa and Namibia. Not, we hasten to acknowledge, because the status quo was criticized in one editorial page. But we will remain open to cogent arguments because they deserve to be heard; not because they will always triumph.

Dr. Lule's final observation for this issue was:

"We in Africa must teach that those in power are there to serve. Once he tasted power, Obote thought he must have it forever. Very few of our heads of state in Africa have been willing to give up power. Leopold Senghor of Senegal is one. And if I may say so, when I found that I couldn't lead the people of Uganda, given the overwhelming negative influence from a neighboring state, I left office rather than be dictated to by Nyerere."

My thanks go to Wilma Fairchild and William Kalema, who helped with the editing of this issue. Willie brought to it the perspective of a Ugandan who hopes that his country will one day be restored to freedom and prosperity.

NED MUNGER



# Munger **Africana** **Library Notes**

ISSUE 67 NOVEMBER 1982

Four Dollars

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN  
UGANDA UNDER OBOTE

By Dr. Yusef Lule

US ISSN 0047-8350

© California Institute of Technology

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# Human Rights Violations in Uganda Under Obote

Yusef Lule

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## Background

In order to comprehend the magnitude of the problem of human rights violations in Uganda, it is necessary to put the current violations in their historical setting. For they are part and parcel of a long historical tradition, dating back to the early days of our country's independence.

Uganda became independent exactly 20 years ago this year. Steadily it degenerated into chaos through a series of murderous and dictatorial regimes. The first such regime was the joint venture of Milton Obote and Idi Amin, from 1966-1971. In 1966 Obote, backed by Amin, had overthrown the constitution which the country had adopted at Independence. During that period Obote and Amin trampled on the fundamental right of Ugandans to choose their own government. Elections that had been scheduled for 1967 were indefinitely postponed. Massacres were carried out with impunity: at Nakulabye, in 1964, Obote's troops massacred 46 innocent people in a market place. No inquiry was permitted by the government. In May/June 1966, throughout Buganda province, more than 200 innocent civilians were killed. There were other massacres, such as the one in Kampala when scores of people were killed following the Lugogo assassination attempt in 1969.

In those years Obote put scores of people under detention without trial, including six of his own senior Cabinet ministers: Grace Ibingira, Mathias Mgobi, Barrack Kirya, Emmanuel Lumu, George Magezi, and Cuthbert Obwangor. In 1969 Obote banned all opposition political parties and put their leaders under detention without trial, including people such as Democratic Party President General Benedicto Kiwanuka, prominent members of Parliament such as Abu Mayanja, "Jolly Joe" Kiwanuka, Amos Sempa, Dr. F. G. Ssembuguya and others. He imprisoned religious leaders such as Prince Badru Kakungulu. He banned all independent newspapers and imprisoned prominent journalists, among them Rajat Neogy, editor of *Transition*, and Davis Sebukima. Well known lawyers such as Dan Wadada Nabudere were incarcerated without trial.

It was also during this period that Obote introduced a number of fascist structures to the machinery of state, to enable him to carry out his repression with greater efficiency. He constructed and equipped the notorious Nakasero torture complex, which later served as one of Amin's killing centers. Obote also created the Gestapo-style General Service, which Amin later turned into his notorious State Research Bureau. Further, he established a killer-squad, which

he called the "Special Force." Amin later converted it into his assassination squad, the "Public Safety Unit."

To crown all this, these structures, Obote overthrew the Uganda Constitution — the fundamental law of the land — thus destroying the rule of law in our motherland.

That was the fascist state which Idi Amin seized in his coup of 1971 and turned to such devastating use against the entire country and the human rights of our people. Amin, Obote's own nurtured demon of repression, ruled the country for eight years on Obote's fascist principles. A conservative estimate of the lives claimed in the period of his regime puts the number at no fewer than 300,000.

When Amin was finally overthrown, all attempts by successive Uganda National Liberation Front (UNLF) administrations to re-establish peace, democracy, and the rule of law were brazenly and constantly sabotaged by the Oboteist faction of the national army under Obote's new demon of blood, Army Chief-of-Staff Oyite Ojok.

Using the massive Tanzanian military presence in the country, the Oboteist faction placed its members in key positions within the UNLF coalition arrangement: Minister of Internal Affairs (responsible for police and prisons), Army Chief-of-Staff, Army Commander, Commander of the strategically placed 15th Battallion — and indeed the whole gamut of army command. These Obote loyalists, who were solely responsible for the law enforcement and security machinery, used their positions to conduct a relentless campaign of terror against the Ugandan population.

## **A Pattern of Murder**

Shortly after the overthrow of Amin, Army Chief-of-Staff Oyite Ojok asked the newly installed president of the country for permission to go and "do it to Amin's people" — a euphemism for indiscriminate killing of the people of West Nile. The President promptly refused and rebuked the Chief-of-Staff. Eighteen months later, when the chairman of the Military Commission, Paulo Muwanga, had taken power in a *coup d'état*, Oyite found his opportunity to "do it to Amin's people." His officers proceeded to pillage, rape, and murder in West Nile. The people of West Nile, who had initially supported the UNLF, were forced to take a hostile attitude toward Oyite's soldiers, thus making it easier for the remnants of the defeated ex-Amin army to stage incursions from across the border with Sudan and Zaire. These incursions involved relatively small numbers of fighters at a time.

Ghostly and widespread murders were reported throughout the entire UNLF period. Sometimes virtually whole populations in an area were wiped out (for example, Madi East), or entire families were slain, including newborn babies.

Almost always these murders, when investigated, were traced to army personnel or militiamen belonging to the Obote faction. But because this faction was in sole control of the law enforcement machinery, they blocked any move

to take action against the culprits, in spite of incontrovertible evidence repeatedly supplied to them. And the Obote faction leaders did not stop at providing safe cover for murderers in their faction, there is foolproof evidence that they actively participated in directing these atrocities. The following are a few selected examples of the many murders committed by the Obote faction under UNLF.

In June/July 1979, following widespread murders in Uganda, a meeting took place between senior medical personnel and the then Minister of Internal Affairs Paulo Muwanga, now Obote's Vice-President. There was a heated exchange between the Principal of the Dental Training School, Dr. John Barlow, and Muwanga. Two days later army men burst into Dr. Barlow's home and shot him dead. Police investigations were carried out, and all the evidence pointed to key members of the Obote faction. The investigation was blocked, and the Inspector-General of Police, David Barlow (a brother of Dr. Barlow) under whose jurisdiction the investigation was conducted, was summarily dismissed.

In June 1980 on the eve of ex-President Yusuf Lule's expected return to Uganda from exile, a total of 13 people were murdered in one evening at Rubaga and their bodies were thrown by the roadside. Eyewitnesses confirmed that an army Leyland bus, registration number OILA06, was used in these killings. Investigations by highly-placed members of the Military Commission government revealed that this bus had been used on numerous occasions before by army men of the Obote faction who went around Kampala kidnapping and murdering people, under the command of Ochaya. In all these cases the bus left from the residence of army Chief-of-Staff, Oyite Ojok, and returned to the same residence after completing its grisly missions. It did exactly the same on the night of the Rubaga/Nalukolongo murders!

In June/July 1980, a total of 43 bodies were found dumped in two heaps — one heap at Kattambwa on Entebbe Road, and the other at Kaazi/Busaabala, near the Diplomatic Club. Some members of the Military Commission government investigated, and found that these victims had been prisoners in the military barracks at Makindye and had been put to death by clubbing. Several officers of Makindye Barracks — Lt. Mukhwana, 2nd Lt. Mbazira, and Regimental Sergeant Major Oyik — were found to have been involved in the killings.

Some of the murdered people, including one Grace Sematimba, had been arrested in Kampala with the full knowledge and express approval of Army Chief-of-Staff Oyite Ojok and other officers in the Obote faction, such as Agwa and Olwol.

The bodies had been transported from Makindye barracks on an army truck which overturned at Kibuye/Lukuli. The soldiers transporting the bodies then high-jacked a passing Ministry of Education truck and used it to take the bodies to Kattambwa and Kaazi, where local civilians were forced to off-load them.

All this information was supplied to Military Commission government leader Paulo Muwanga, Army Chief-of-Staff Oyite Ojok, and Army Commander Tito Okillo during a formal meeting of the Military Commission. Compelled by the weight of the evidence supplied, Muwanga, Oyite, and Okello promised

to arrest the officers concerned that very day. The same day, on the national radio network, Muwanga announced that he would set up a commission of inquiry to investigate the Makindye killings.

Needless to say, the promised arrests were never carried out. Instead, almost immediately, Regimental Sergeant Major Oyik, a key figure in the murders, was sent on a senior MCO course at Jinja and was shortly afterward promoted to the rank of Major! And, of course, Muwanga's promised commission of inquiry never materialized — it was never named or appointed!

One night in July/August 1980, 2nd Lt. George Karenzi of Lubiri Barracks was traveling back to base from a visit to Bugolobi Barracks. At Old Kampala, near the Lohana Club, the car in which Karenzi was traveling was ambushed and Karenzi, with two others, was killed. According to investigations carried out by highly-placed persons in the Military Commission government, Karenzi was killed by an Obote faction soldier, Okello Okwera of Lubiri Barracks. Karenzi was known for his independent-mindedness, and the motive for his killing seems to have been an attempt at systematic decimation of the officer corps that would not accept manipulation by the Obote faction. Also Karenzi, an ethnic Bantu, was deemed undesirable in an army led by Oyite Ojok, a proponent of Nilotic military supremacy. The then deputy leader of the Military Commission government, Yoweri Museveni, officially wrote to Oyite Ojok, demanding an investigation, but Ojok merely wrote back to express his regrets at the incident, and promised to do everything possible to assist Karenzi's relatives.

Nevertheless, the morning following Karenzi's murder, soldiers rounded up about 3000 people at Rubaga Road and ordered them to sit under the heavy tropical rain which was falling that morning. At about 10:00 a.m. Lieutenant Colonel Bazilio Olara Okello, Commander of the Strategic 15th Battalion and a key member of the Obote faction, arrived and ordered four civilians at random to stand up. They were promptly shot dead by one of Bazilio's bodyguards! Thereupon Bazilio proceeded to give the terrified civilians a lecture on how he would have killed all of them if he were sure they were all ethnic Bantus!

These actions of Bazilio were witnessed by various press correspondents, and his remarks were widely quoted in the local and international press. Absolutely nothing was ever done to Bazilio by way of criminal proceedings or even a mild rebuke. On the contrary, he is flourishing in every sense under the benevolent gaze of Milton Obote.

In September, following the murder in cold blood of a local bank official by none other than the Commanding Officer of Koboko Barracks himself, there was another incursion of a small group of anti-government fighters from neighboring Sudan. In the wake of this incursion, the army and militia launched indiscriminate slaughter on the population of Madi-East, leaving 50,000 people unaccounted for and more than 110,000 refugees. With flutes blowing tribal war tunes of victory, Oboteist troops burned houses and looted property which they carried away on official army trucks back to their tribal areas.

The Obote-Ojok-Muwanga triumvirate barred everybody, including Red Cross officials, from visiting the area while all this was going on. Only later, in February 1981, were the full, gruesome details of this genocide against the

people of West Nile to be revealed by the editor-in-chief of the *Uganda Times*, the official government daily. The government of Milton Obote, however, later denounced the story, dismissed the editor-in-chief, and detained him without trial until his escape to take up refuge outside the country! [In this report we publish an eye-witness account of one of the massacres which were conducted by Obote's troops against the people of the West Nile during June of 1981.]

## **The Electoral Fraud**

When Amin and his band of murderers were routed out of Uganda our hope and prayer as Ugandans, was that the principles of the struggle against dictatorship and fascism would eventually, rather sooner than later, lead to a properly elected, democratic government, committed to the service of all in Uganda.

Unfortunately, before long the people of Uganda were already smelling doom because of what was happening during the electioneering period. Political opponents were being murdered (for example, Victor Muhindo, the Democratic Party candidate for Kasese); government machinery and powers were being usurped for serving the interests of one of the four political parties; there was illegal army recruitment exclusively of the northerners under the pretext of militia; mass murders were being committed in West Nile and Madi districts under the cover of repulsing Amin's invading forces; election officials suspected of being impartial were dismissed (for example, the fourteen District Commissioners who were to act as election Returning Officers); security forces were being deployed in strategic places throughout the country; and the killing of innocent civilians by government soldiers was becoming increasingly widespread. Many other acts were committed with disregard for human rights, and tension mounted throughout the whole country.

Against this unfortunate background, the Commonwealth election team came, *but came too late*, only to witness the final phase of what other political parties in Uganda, termed fraudulent elections, whose results they have refused to accept — challenging them to the extent of waging an armed struggle in order to topple [what they call] another obviously fascist regime.

The Obote forces, through Paulo Muwanga, head of the Military Commission government, staged one of the most blatant frauds in electoral history. Using a decree he promulgated on December 11, 1980, Muwanga took over all the powers of the Electoral Commission and used them to reverse the humiliating defeat of the Obote group, finally announcing Obote as President, and himself as Vice-President and Minister of Defence!

## **Repression and Murder since 1980**

After this seizure of power, and lacking a popular base, the Obote regime once again resorted to mass killings and other forms of primitive repression. Their main motive is to terrorize the Ugandan people into submission and eternal servitude.

In this exercise the Obote regime has as its pillars the same people who were responsible for atrocities in the UNLF era. Only this time they have been made more powerful and are able to act more brazenly, as in the case of the murder of Stephen Mulira, a prominent official of the Lint Marketing Board. Mulira was personally abducted from an official road-block at the clock tower in Kampala by Army-Chief-of-Staff Oyite Ojok; he was taken to Oyite's room in Nile Mansions, where he was allowed to make a last telephone call to his family before he was murdered on the orders of Oyite and Luwuliza Kirunda, Obote's Minister of Internal Affairs.

A compendium of human rights violations under the current regime has been made by a number of conscientious Ugandans, and it is not necessary to dwell on the same details here. Suffice it to point out that these are some, and only some, of the cases that have been recorded under very difficult conditions in Uganda, given the brutality employed by the present regime to cover up its atrocities.

The regime, condemned all over the world for its persistent violations of human rights, has invented a number of flimsy excuses to explain away its deplorable record. The regime claims that it inherited a situation of insecurity from previous UNLF administrations — in which there had been many killings. These killings, so the regime claims, have spilled over into the present administration. By all accounts the present killings are rather an intensification of those carried out during the UNLF period. But it must also be added that the culprits are still the same: the Obote forces.

The regime sometimes shifts its argument and blames the current killings, pillage, and rape on stray soldiers in an undisciplined army. This line is normally advanced to deceive foreign governments, into giving the regime military assistance, ostensibly to train and instill discipline into Obote's army, but in reality to give a morale boost to his regime.

This argument, however, is ridiculous in the face of incontrovertible evidence that top officials of the regime are personally involved in these acts. It is also clear that the acts of lower cadres of the army are officially condoned: soldiers will drive stolen cars openly with the full knowledge of their superiors, while looted property is transported on government vehicles in broad daylight. All these things happen under the benevolent gaze and encouragement of the Obote regime. They cannot be lightly shrugged off as the acts of stray soldiers. Moreover, Obote himself, in a speech delivered at Soroti on 28/29th March 1981, vowed to unleash his army on the Baganda (see report in the London *Daily Telegraph*). The atrocities are, therefore, part of a deliberate Government policy.

A popular propaganda gimmick of the regime with certain audiences is to blame the killings on the guerrilla war (although in other circumstances the regime denies that there is such a war). This is the same fascist effrontery that was used by Idi Amin to explain away his murders of 300,000 Ugandans in cold blood! While he continued to butcher innocent citizens and to stage "disappearances" of others, Amin's "Uganda Broadcasting Corporation" blamed all these acts on anti-government guerrillas.

It must be pointed out, however, that the present regime cannot blame stray soldiers, past UNLF governments, or "guerrillas, terrorists and bandits" for its despicable record of massive detentions without trial, and harsh conditions of imprisonment, or for torture and killings within the walls of its own army barracks, police cells, and government prisons. These institutions are not controlled by guerrillas but by the regime itself.

It is clear that all these atrocities are the full responsibility and deliberate policy of the regime, and the army is only its instrument.

In a human rights exercise such as this one, it is an unpleasant task to undertake to compare evil against evil in fascism and dictatorship involving massive destruction of lives and property. Once this situation exists, qualitative differences become irrelevant and condemnation by all democratic peoples of the world becomes justified.

We innocent Ugandans are now forced, however, to draw a comparison between Amin's and Obote's regimes, since there already exists adequate evidence to support our position that *Obote's regime has turned out to be worse than Amin's regime in the extent to which it has committed acts in violation of human rights.*

The mass murders openly committed by the current Obote regime [as supported by an account appearing attached to this paper as Annex II], clearly add a new dimension to the killings carried out by the Amin regime and therefore make the Obote regime more dangerous to the people of Uganda.

The mass murders and individual killings in Uganda have so grown out of all proportion that recently the leaders of the four major religious groups in Uganda—the Roman Catholic Church, the Church of Uganda (Anglican); the Orthodox Church; and the Muslim faith, were led to issue a joint statement about the atrocities being committed by the Obote regime.

[We, the people of Uganda therefore find ourselves in a more desperate situation than in that of the Amin regime and send an appeal to the democratic peoples of the world to condemn the Obote regime of murder and terror. We appeal for rescue before it is too late.]

## **Attack on the Judiciary**

The judiciary in Uganda as the main pillar of the rule of law has been so manipulated that it has been reduced to another political arm of the Obote regime. The quality of the bench no longer has relevance in Uganda's judiciary.

After taking power in December 1980, the Obote regime made sure that all judges of impeccable character left the bench. The first to go was the Chief Justice, Mr. S. W. W. Wambuzi, whose legal record and capability had carried him to the highest level in the now defunct East African Community as President of the Court of Appeal for East Africa, later as a justice of appeal on the Kenya Court of Appeal. With him went the Registrar of the High Court, E. K. Mutyabule, High Court judges of high standing such as F. M. Ssekandi, Justice of Appeal, and other judiciary officials such as the highly respected Solicitor General, Francis Ayume.

It was not embarrassing to the Obote regime to appoint a Chief Justice in the



person of one George Masika, whose record as Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) under the first Obote regime in the sixties was well known and who in the late sixties had compromised himself in many ways. The new Chief Justice, immediately on appointment, compromised himself still farther and got his two wives appointed — the first wife (Ruth Masika) as Commissioner for Law Reform, and the second wife (Caroline Okello) as Administrator General. Masika's cousin, one Davis M. Wekesa, was appointed Solicitor General, replacing Francis Ayume.

In the Uganda of Obote today, it is not possible to get the machinery of justice operating to discharge its proper duty. Magistrates who allow fair trial to some prisoners are abducted, tortured, detained, and/or murdered (for example, Chief Magistrate of Jinja). Prominent lawyers who pursue justice through client representation are either murdered or arbitrarily arrested and detained (for instance, Cyprian Kawoya, abducted from the High Court and subsequently murdered, or George Bamuturaki, shot and killed recently when he had gone to collect his wife from Kamwokya). Obviously it is virtually impossible for the people of Uganda to obtain redress for the wrongs committed against them.

An even clearer indicator of the Obote regime's bad faith is that on those rare occasions when a detainee is released on Court orders, the security forces do not even wait for him to leave the court before they re-arrest him and return him to prison — this time without any record of his arrest being kept. Thereafter the authorities deny all knowledge of the prisoner's whereabouts on the basis that the detainee was produced before the court and freed.

The Obote regime has therefore destroyed the confidence of the judges and magistrates to the extent that none of the very few competent ones still serving on the bench can predict the results of the judgement he might deliver in any case brought before him.

Since December 1980, arrests and detentions without justifiable cause and trial have exceeded any level known in the history of Uganda. Prisoners are badly tortured, and often maimed. They are denied medical attention; they are not given adequate food to eat and water to drink; they are not allowed visitors, even close relatives; they are confined off the record so that the regime cannot be held accountable for their whereabouts; they are transferred from one place to another and some of them killed and dumped en route. Other tortures are committed in violation of their basic rights.

## **Attack on Press Freedom**

Soon after Amin's regime was overthrown, freedom of expression, association and worship returned to Uganda. This was evidenced by the number of newspapers that mushroomed on the streets daily — among them (1) *The Citizen*, a paper backed by the Democratic Party, (2) *Weekly Topic*, an independent and a highly analytical and objective paper, (3) *Economy*, and (4) *Mulengera* — two sister papers.

These above papers were privately financed and operated and were therefore free to take an independent line in their editorial policies as opposed to the

*Uganda Times*, a government expropriated property bound to sing the government tune, and *The People*, mouthpiece of the one political party, the UPC.

Soon after Obote took power in December 1980, the hammer fell immediately and almost simultaneously immediately and almost simultaneously on the independent papers, whose editors and management personnel were abducted, some to unknown destinations (most likely to the notorious "Namanve forest"), and others to detention without trial.

At the time Obote became President, a number of foreign papers and broadcasting companies had their correspondents based in Kampala, among them Cameron Morton (British Broadcasting Corporation); Hugh Davies (*Daily Telegraph* - London); Norman Rhee (*Ind. T.V. News*); Paul Dhillon (*I.T.N.*); Ayub Mirza (*I.T.N.*); Mark Lee (Reuters and Associated press); and Tom Lansner ( ). Tom Lansner was the last foreign correspondent to leave; he managed to sneak out of Uganda while his deportation order was being signed.

These above foreign correspondents reported truthfully about the situation in Uganda and in particular about the atrocities that were being committed daily by the Obote regime. In an attempt to hide the truth of the situation from the eyes of the world and in order to continue to commit their atrocities, the Obote regime deported all foreign correspondents, one after another, until now there are none left in Uganda. Hugh Davies, for example, was deported after investigating Obote's new torture centers at the Milton Obote Foundation in Industrial Area, and at the Kireka Military Barracks.

The behavior of government troops since Obote took power is worse than that of wounded buffalo. They charge without any provocation and kill innocent civilians for pleasure.

Eyewitness accounts that we managed to obtain concerning massacres in West Nile and in Luwero Districts provide clear indication about the Obote regime's determination to exterminate the tribes that do not support his political party, the UPC. When he finishes with the West Nile and Luwero Districts, he will turn his guns on other districts.

The massacres that have been and are being committed by the Government troops, many of them during broad daylight—in homes, churches, missions, hospitals, and other public places—of the aged, of women and children,—leave millions of Ugandans with no hope of survival in the current regime.

## **Eyewitness Accounts**

Eyewitness accounts provide some of the most shocking revelations of the situation in Uganda that remain least known to the outside world. They describe individual and personal experiences or torture, beatings, humiliations, terrible conditions in jails either in Military barracks or other jails, lack of food to eat and water to drink, denial of medical treatment, and many other horrifying experiences.

Some of the above eyewitnesses are alive and present to tell their stories directly having escaped the country. These include Bakulu-Mpagi Wamala, a former Publicity Secretary of the Uganda Patriotic Movement

(UPM), and Evelyn Nyakato, a former teacher at Kitante Primary School, both of whom underwent the Makindye military jail experience. Other eyewitnesses are still in Uganda, and for their personal safety it has been necessary to withhold their identities.

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# Ombaci and Other West Nile Massacres

*By an Eyewitness*

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On Monday, June first, a contingent of bush fighters attack elements of the UNLA at Lodonga. It's about 7:00 a.m. The fighting lasts until about 11:30, when the attackers retreat into the bush. The UNLA soldiers, angered by the attack, unleash their anger on the civilians still gravitating around the mission. The death toll is 14 bodies of civilians accounted for (the International Red Cross has the list of names, ages, cause of death): among them is the body of Brother Jacob of the Marian Brothers. Soldiers loot the mission and the Parish Priest is miraculously spared. He spends the night inside the Church. The next day, thanks to a sympathetic officer, he is able to recover his glasses and his car. He loads some wounded civilians and takes them to Otumbari, then proceeds to Ombaci.

Having seen the behavior of the UNLA troops around West Nile, the Bishop of Arua orders the evacuation of the missions of Otumbari and Terego. With the help of the Red Cross the evacuation is carried out without problems between June 3 and June 4.

In the meantime the behavior of soldiers deteriorates steadily. Instead of facing the bush fighters, soldiers go from village to village stealing everything in sight and, at times, killing unarmed civilians. The Red Cross makes a list of 45 civilians killed by members of the Armed Forces in the first 20 days of June. In some cases those responsible for the killings are known, but the authorities refuse to take action. Here are some examples.

On June 7 Ugandan troops, led by 2nd Lt. Mukili, loot the mission of Ochodri. On June 13, soldiers kill 8 civilians at Olaba (Maracha) in retaliation for an ambush set by guerrillas against UNLA soldiers.

During the same period relations between the army and Red Cross delegates in the area worsen. This is due to the accurate, but necessary, negative reports Red Cross workers are sending to Kampala. A feeling of fear grips the whole area and, just as in October, 1980, people begin to flock to Ombaci for protection.

The situation takes a deep plunge for the worse on June 19, when close to 2000 UNLA troops leave their posts at Yumbe, Ladonga, Koboko and move towards Arua. Along the way they loot villages and kill civilians. Once again Arua is looted of whatever is left from last year's troubles. People run for their lives. Those who can, run to Zaire, while about 1000 take refuge at Ediofe, where the Catholic Cathedral is situated. Once again Ombaci is overrun by people seeking security there (about 7000). On the 20th even the Arua Hospital moves to Ombaci with its staff of French volunteers. They set up an emergency

hospital in the Primary School building. It is of interest at this point to note that among the patients removed from Arua they also have a wounded UNLA soldier. Rumors reach Ombaci that the bush fighters are closing in. The UNLA has set up a cannon right next to the Emergency hospital. For safety reasons the hospital is moved again, this time to the retreat house belonging to the missionaries and situated in the mission compound. The Red Cross takes over the compound marking it clearly with their official symbols and a Red Cross flag. From that time the Red Cross assumes responsibility for relief work, distribution of food and medicine, and relations with the military.

June 23 begins with some shelling from the bush fighters; no UNLA soldiers are in sight! Around 9:00 the first bush fighters arrive bringing assurances that they have no intentions of doing any harm to the people in the compound. The Red Cross representative makes them agree not to enter the compound. Some drinking water and food, that they had requested, is handed to them at the gate.

In the afternoon the guerrillas return with some of their wounded. Some of them had been caught in a trap while entering Arua. Before accepting the wounded the Red Cross representative tells them: "Inside the hospital we have a wounded UNLA soldier. If you leave him alone, we shall treat your casualties. If you harm him in any way, we shall refuse to give you any medical assistance." The officer in charge answers: "The wounded are no longer enemies and we shall not disturb the patients." Throughout their stay the guerrillas have always honoured their words.

Note that a wounded UNLA soldier was also at the other hospital at Maracha, but was never bothered by the bush fighters. He was evacuated to Zaire before the doctors decided to leave Maracha. The injured soldier at Ombaci was later taken to Angal together with the civilians wounded by the UNLA on June 24.

Among the wounded bush fighters brought to Ombaci there are two officers, Galla and Abiriga. Abiriga dies almost immediately. Galla, seriously wounded, undergoes emergency surgery and recovers enough to leave the hospital later on(!!!) On that same day the bush fighters set up a cannon well outside the compound, on the football field. The night between June 23 and 24 is uneventful.

Early in the morning of June 24 several people gather for Mass in the Church of Ombaci parish and many also receive communion; around 9:00 a.m., some bush fighters arrive and evacuate their wounded. They are all put on a Tata Lorry together with the body of Abiriga. A few minutes later heavy gunfire is heard not far from Ombaci. People take shelter in several buildings on the compound. But worse is yet to come.

Suddenly a group of UNLA soldiers led by second Lieutenant Alex Aguma invades the Red Cross compound; Aguma had been at Ombaci earlier in the week threatening that he would come back and kill people. The same officer had earlier stolen fuel from a Red Cross vehicle while holding his gun on a Red Cross worker. He had also been prying open the door of the Mission Treasurer's office and stealing several items from there. He is also guilty of having fired at a Red Cross official.

The soldiers are all over the compound. In a garage next to the fuel pump they

shoot on several civilians, killing about twenty and wounding many more, mostly women and children. Meanwhile a soldier enters the living room where volunteers and mission personnel have taken refuge. He asks to see the ID of a civilian, looks at it, gives it back to the man and then shoots him dead. Another soldier enters the Church shooting wildly, thus killing one civilian and wounding another one. Soldiers rush into the wood workshop near the entrance to the school. There they demand money from the terrified civilians. Those who have money are saved; those who don't are shot. In a classroom another soldier shoots on the crowd indiscriminately killing and wounding several people. While he is about to do the same in another classroom, a fellow soldier mercifully stops him. In the metal workshop soldiers also shoot wildly into the crowd, wounding several people.

The massacres would have continued with worse consequences, since Aguma was actually encouraging his soldiers to shoot, if it had not been for the timely arrival of another group of UNLA soldiers led by Lt. Odeke. With the help of officer cadet Jovis he and his soldiers, at their own risk, put an end to the shooting. While both the missionaries and the volunteers had managed to survive unhurt, they had just the same been relieved of their watches, cameras, radios and money by Aguma's men.

After the shooting the missionaries and the volunteers begin to search for the dead and wounded. About 50 dead are found in the compound together with close to 100 wounded. These are later taken to the emergency hospital where the French doctors, four Germans who had arrived early in the morning and a missionary sister begin to tend to the wounds. At 4:00 p.m. a convoy is formed to evacuate 60 injured civilians and some missionaries. News reaches Ombaci that the Cathedral compound at Ediofe has been looted. However, the Bishop together with all religious personnel residing there had left on the previous day. The wounded from Ombaci are taken to Angal hospital.

On Friday June 26, Ugandans learn from the media that the attack on Ombaci had been caused by the fact that the missionaries there were giving shelter and supplies to the bush fighters and that, to prove it, the body of Galla had been found on the compound (!). On Saturday, June 27 Brig. Gen. Oyite Ojok visits the compound and encourages the people to remain calm and think of the possibility of returning home. He has cordial words for the missionaries and the Red Cross and other volunteer workers. He further promises that those responsible for the crime will be brought to justice. A few days later, however, Alex Aguma drives into the compound and demands fuel. He is firmly chased out of the premises.

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# Inside Obote's Jail

## *A Personal Account*

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### Editorial Note:

Bakulu Mpagi Wamala was born on July 8, 1947 in the Mengo District of the then Buganda Kingdom. He was educated at St. Henry's College, Kitovu, and Kings College, Budo, before joining Makerere University where he took a degree in French and Philosophy. He then went to the University of Kent at Canterbury, England, and took a Masters degree in Philosophy, returning to lecture at Makerere University. Later he worked as Chief Information Consultant to a UNDP Project in the country.

His father was shot and killed by Amin's soldiers in March 1976. Shortly afterwards he himself narrowly escaped death at the hands of another band of Amin's men. He went into exile and lived in Kenya where he worked as an information consultant. Returning to Uganda at the end of 1979, he took an active part in national politics. He was one of the founders of the Uganda Patriotic Movement becoming its first National Secretary for Information and Publicity. "Rather naively in a violent world," he says, "I have always been a man of peace, and cannot remember ever involving myself in a fist fight or any physical scuffle in my life." He remembers once running into trouble for refusing to slaughter a chicken for dinner—because he could not bear to inflict pain on the poor bird!

On Thursday, March 26, 1981 he was abducted from his home by Obote's troops and was badly wounded in the process. In early April several newspapers and major radio networks around the world carried the news of his death among them the BBC, the Voice of Germany, the Voice of America, Radio RSA, *The Times* (London), and *The Nation* (Nairobi). The following is an account of what actually happened:

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By now a large crowd has assembled from the adjacent Silver Springs Hotel. There are almost two hundred people. As soon as I get to the compound a soldier gives me another Swahili order to lie down on the tarmac access road. I do so immediately, and the soldiers begin to stab me with their bayonets, rifle butts, and to kick me with their military boots. Somebody among the residents, probably my wife, screams. Children and women begin screaming and crying. I am bleeding profusely, but have not begun to feel any pain. The stabbing, butting and boot kicks continue for what seems to me eternity.

At last the bayonet stabs, rifle butts and boot kicks stop. I am barely conscious, but I can hear the order that I should be driven to Nile Mansions, the luxury apartment hotel that serves as a home for almost all Obote's ministers. Also the Hotel, a room 105 and two other rooms, serve as torture chambers for Obote's nascent Secret Service.

Four men grab me by the limbs and throw me, as you would a sack of dry beans, on to a white Datsun 1200 pick-up van. One soldier stands with his heavy boots on my swollen head, another stands on my stomach while a third stands over my thighs. Bleeding intensifies. I can feel it. The van sets off. The soldiers sing and dance, jumping up and down on top of me. I should report that somewhere along the road I am thoroughly searched and stripped of any valuables I have: my watch, a pocket pipe, pipe tobacco, Shs. 7000/-cash (equivalent to US \$1000 at official rates), a trouser belt, shoes, socks and a pipe lighter. My identification papers are also taken from me. A fist fight ensues over even who should take my watch.

Later we reach Nile Mansions. Again like a sack of beans, I am thrown off the van onto the hard tarmac, and I begin bleeding through the nose. Every inch of my beige safari suit is covered in blood from bayonet wounds and other injuries. I am subjected to another round of bayonet stabbing, boot kicks and rifle-butt blows. Then I am frog-marched to the entrance of Nile Mansions.

Without the aid of my spectacles I cannot see very far. All the same I can see there are many people about the place. As we pass I recognize two of Obote's Ministers who knew me. The soldiers are given orders to take me to "Operations Control Room."

I am not sure whether this is the same as room 105, the notorious torture chamber. We are moving up the steps of Nile Mansions. An Army officer is coming down the same steps. He is told something by one of the soldiers guarding me. He looks at me and replies in Swahili, "I am tired, take him to Makindye (barracks)."

I am pushed down the stair case, and land on my head in the lounge of Nile Mansions. I am picked up by the soldiers and taken back to the waiting Datsun 1200 pick-up van. Once more I am thrown onto the back, face down this time. The soldiers resume their positions standing on me. We drive off, I am not sure where to. I have a suspicion that I am going to be killed and that my body will probably turn up in one of the forests around Kampala, like so many others have done in recent weeks.

From a corner of my eye I catch a glimpse of one of the soldiers. He tears up my identity papers, and says "He won't need them anymore." I am now convinced that I am going to my death. I become unconscious at this stage. A total black-out engulfs me.

When I open my eyes again we are already in Makindye Military Barracks, the notorious Makindye Military barracks. It is barely daylight. I am thrown off the van. I am beaten and kicked once again, but no bayonet stabbing this time. Everybody seems convinced that I am "finished" (euphemism for dead).

One of the soldiers who have brought me tells those we find on duty in Makindye that another *maiti* (dead body) has been brought. I am careful to note that no statement has been made by those who have brought me in. No record at all is made that I have been brought into the barracks. Anybody can do anything to me now — kill me, smuggle me out or whatever — and it could not be traced to Makindye Barracks.

My hands and legs are tied with a rope. I am pushed into a room, nay, a dungeon right next to the main gate to Makindye Barracks. No ventilation of any kind. Heavy metal door. Urine all over the floor and other human excrement in a corner. Fresh blood spattered about the walls. Maybe somebody has just been killed here. There is a nauseating smell of death and filth inside the cell. When I am pushed into the room, I fall down and become part of this filth. I guess it is about 7:00 p.m. local time.

Suddenly I become aware of pains, sharp pains all over my body. Both sides of my chest are painful and I cannot lie down sideways. I have to lie on my back, though this too, is considerably painful.

The heavy, metal door opens. Somebody is brought in; another prisoner or someone to spy on me? My hands are tied to his, but his legs are free. I cannot possibly shift my body now without his co-operation. Other prisoners are pushed in; I suppose about



ten in this tiny, ten-foot-by-ten dungeon. It is unbearably hot. I feel I am about to faint, but I must not allow myself to do so. I have a bad temperature. I want to undo the buttons of my safari suit, but with my hands bound up and tied to another person this is nearly impossible. However, with a lot of pain and effort I manoeuvre my hands into a position to unbutton the jacket. With even more difficulty I manage to shift my jacket so that my back remains bare. My hands have been cut by the sisal rope.

Now I feel cooler, now that my bare back is lying in the cold urine on the floor. Since my watch has been appropriated by the bandit soldiers, I cannot tell what time it is exactly. But I think it is around 8:00 p.m. There is complete darkness inside and outside. The soldiers on guard outside our dungeon are smoking marijuana. Another voice, presumably an officer, joins them. The door of the dungeon is thrown ajar and one of them begins thrashing about the dungeon with a stick. A yell of pain from one of the prisoners. Most of the prisoners have been standing, since there is no room for them to lie down or sit. Only me, my rope-mate and one or two others are lying on the floor. When the thrashing begins there is a stampede in the room, each prisoner trying to dodge the mad swing of the sticks. Several times I am trodden underfoot, but I am too ill to protest. Yells of pain from prisoners who are caught by the stick. Sadistic peals of laughter from the marijuana-loaded soldiers outside.

At last the mad stick stops. The door is bolted from outside. One of the drunken voices outside vows in Swahili, "Lazima hapa watakufa maiti mbili leo" (I swear there will be two dead bodies here tonight). He orders his men to fit his pistol with a silencer. Now I know for sure that I am going to be killed. I seem to be the most "dangerous" prisoner in the room. I am the only one bound hand and foot, and certainly the most roughly abused so far. The voice which has promised itself to kill two of us tonight says now he is going for supper and returning later.

A heavy cloud of death is hanging menacingly over us. My thoughts inevitably gravitate towards my children. My youngest child, a son, is only about 8 months old. My eldest child, a daughter, is under 9 years old. In between there are three other daughters. What will happen to them after my death? What will happen to my old mother whose husband (my father) was killed by the Amin regime? And what will happen to this poor country?

My thoughts are interrupted. A prisoner in this cell is pleading with the guards outside to allow him to go and ease himself. He is harshly told to shut up. Other prisoners mumble among themselves. I suppose everybody wants to ease themselves. An order is given by the guards that anybody wishing to ease themselves has to do it on the floor. For the next five minutes all other sounds are drowned in the sound of falling urine. I am still lying on my back, and can feel the urine level rising on the concrete floor. My clothes, every inch already covered in blood, are receiving an extra coating of filthy urine! But I am too preoccupied with other thoughts to worry about the cleanliness of a body I know will shortly be lifeless. I go back to my thoughts. Where will my dead body be thrown? Will it be recovered and be laid to rest in my ancestral burial ground beside my father and my grandfather? How will this be possible when my identity papers have all been destroyed? I wish I could find a pen and paper to write my names down somewhere!

Another interruption — this time from outside. A drunken soldier has been coming into the barracks through the gate, with his equally drunken girlfriend. A quarrel ensues between him and the soldiers on guard. It seems that this particular girlfriend was in the barracks earlier in the day, with another soldier. The arriving soldier and his girlfriend are making a lot of noisy protests. They too, are pushed into our dungeon. Their noise grows even louder. The guards outside open the door again and take out the wailing woman whom they take turns to rape on the veranda. There are now about five different

excited voices outside. A number of women passing by on the adjacent road are stopped by the soldiers. They too, are brought into the barracks and raped on the veranda. Finally all the women are pushed into our dungeon. I reckon there are now about 15 people in this little room. The urine level on the floor is ever rising, as in the nauseous stench of putrefaction.

It is now about 11:00 p.m. but it may be later. I am only guessing. I go back to thoughts of my impending death. What will become of X? What will become of Y? All the people with whom I have shared my life? A million other thoughts and questions.

I emerge from these thoughts and realize that our drunken "executioner" is probably asleep and mostly likely not coming back tonight. It is about 1:00 a.m. I might last the night if I do not die of bleeding. My thoughts now turn towards my body for the first time since my arrest. I feel an awful lot of pain everywhere, and my mind is full of questions. How badly injured am I? If I do not die tonight, shall I get emergency medical treatment tomorrow? Shall I survive the notorious crude torture of Makindye Barracks, to which I shall certainly be subjected? Is anybody outside this barracks taking any interest in what is happening to us here? What is right now happening to my family who remained at the mercy of Obote's soldier when I was abducted? In incredible physical pain and psychological torture, I spend the remaining hours of the night till dawn. For the first time in my life I have spent a night without sleeping even one second, without even dozing.

It is about 7:00 a.m. on Friday, March 27th 1981, and I am still lying on my back in the urine bound hand and foot. The soldiers outside seem to be changing guard. Shortly afterwards the door of our small dungeon is thrown open. Some fresh air, sweet fresh air comes in to dilute the stench of sweat, urine, and other human excreta. Outside there is a heavy downpour of tropical torrential rain.

A soldier peers into our cell and recoils back — probably from the stench. He orders the women to run out and go back to their homes. The rest of us he orders to lick, with our tongues, the urine off the floor. He says he will be back in five minutes and must find the room clean. The inmates take off their shirts and start drying the floor. I cannot join in since I am still bound. Moreover my clothes are thoroughly drenched in urine and can absorb no more. The urine is too much for the men's shirts to absorb. They cannot wrench them dry because the urine will get back on the floor. They put back the shirts on their backs and remove their trousers which they use to dry the floor, and hastily wear again.

The guard returns and orders all of us to run out of the room. Everyone runs out except me and my rope-mate. After giving me a nasty kick in the ribs the guard unties the rope. I try to stand but collapse on the floor. The guard gets hold of me by my hair and drags me out into the rain where the rest of the inmates are.

Lying on the grass in the rain, I begin to feel a bit of life return to me. Also I feel somewhat cleansed of last night's filth. I can now sit, and even stand! Though with pain. For almost four hours the torrential downpour continues unabated. It is supposed to be a punishment to us, but I am relishing it. I begin to examine myself but only one eye can see. The other is too swollen. I have several wounds which are still bleeding, but in the rain the blood is beginning to coagulate and prevent further bleeding. I know I have bad wounds in the back, but I cannot see them.

After about 4 hours, we are ordered to get out of the still pouring rain, and are herded into a clerical office at the quarter-guard. Each is informally asked by a corporal why he has been brought to the barracks. Obviously the soldiers on duty do not know anything about any of us. Each one explains. A school-boy, about 15, had been returning home in the evening from school when soldiers grabbed him at Mulago trading center, took his watch and shoes and brought him to Makindye Barracks when he protested. Another

boy, about 16, had gone to buy sugar from the trading center at Mulago when both the sugar and the boy were hijacked to Makindye by soldiers. And so on and so forth. When the Corporal comes to me I mumble something. No records taken. I don't know any of the prisoners.

It is now about mid-day. We are taken out of the clerical office to the adjacent quarter-guard cells. One cell, which acts as a "transit" room for inmates — has a number of prisoners brought during the previous two days. There are about 15 in all. To this our own number is added. In an adjacent cell, separated from the "transit" room by a metal grille, one catches a glimpse of other prisoners — mainly army and airforce men gated for one reason or another. But there are other civilian prisoners as well.

In the "transit" room I manage to sit up, with my back pressed against the wall. My clothes get stickier at the back. I look at the wall to check and find a blotch of fresh blood on the wall where my back has been pressed. A wound in my back is still bleeding!

One of the prisoners in the "transit" room has recognized me. An exclamation of shock. Two or three more inmates recognize me. We talk briefly. An examination of my wounds. I have eight bayonet wounds in all, one of them between two ribs in my back. Later examination reveals that this particular bayonet stab barely missed my heart by a fraction of an inch. I fear that savage boot kicks in the chest may have dislocated a rib — because I can feel a lot of pain. It turns out on later examination that my spleen has been damaged. My face and head are swollen from rifle-butt hits and boot kicks. Only one eye can see.

After about one hour in the "transit" room all of us, including those we found there, are taken out for interrogation in the administrative quarter of the barracks; about two hundred yards farther down the hill inside the barracks. We are made to sit in the rain on the concrete pavement in front of an office which, I later learn, belongs to Intelligence Officer I Mukhwana. There are about 25 prisoners in all. There are also about 10 soldiers towering over the prisoners with various torture gadgets — most of them very crude and rudimentary: a bundle of barbed wire lengths, a pair of tongs, a club, etc. It is now about 1:30 in the afternoon.

The office of Intelligence Officer I Mukhwana is still locked. Meanwhile the captives are subjected to torture by the soldiers who seem to be amusing themselves. Barbed wire is used on the bare backs of the captives, and when the teeth have sunk into flesh, the barbed wire is pulled, violently tearing the flesh of the victim. All prisoners are subjected to this form of torture except myself. I look more dead than alive. Then another form of torture starts: a soldier with a pair of tongs slits the lower lip of a prisoner, the upper lip of another one, the nose of a third, and the right hand ear of yet another!

The more you scream with pain, the more torture you invite because the soldiers find you more fun. A soldier breaks a bottle into several pieces and is determined to "shave" off my long beard with one of the pieces! He is stopped by an elderly Acholi soldier who says that more respect should be given to the dead than to the living. He too was billing me as good as dead.

The office of Intelligence Officer I Mukhwana is now opened, and Mukhwana himself appears shortly. A vicious-looking character appears with him. I later learn that his name is Roger, and that he has taken the lives of many prisoners. On this occasion eight of the prisoners, apparently the healthiest, are selected. An order is given by Roger that they should be taken to the Go-Down and given the "V.I.P. Treatment." Sticks, clubs and boot kicks begin to rain on the eight as they are dragged to the "Go-Down."

The "Go-Down" occupies one side, the lower side, of the administrative quarter, which is a sort of square complex with a square green in the middle. The Go-Down is at right angles to the offices occupied by Intelligence offices. It is only five yards away

from where I am sitting now. But to get into it one has to go outside the square, to the back of the block where the only entrance to the Go-Down is.

About three to four minutes later, the eight inmates begin yelling and crying in pain. There is a sound of whips, clubs, sticks and metal bars coming down. Louder cries of agony. After about 5 minutes the cries gradually weaken until they cease altogether, but the swishing and landing of the sticks continue with intensified ferocity for another five minutes. When this, too, stops, eight limp bodies are dragged out to near where we are sitting. Five of them, identified as dead, are thrown in a heap in one corner of the square. The other three, barely still breathing, are laid out in the rain. Two of them die the following day, but one of them survives miraculously.

As soon as the "V.I.P treatment" is thus concluded, Mukhwana addresses the remaining inmates, threatening to subject the rest of us to similar treatment unless we co-operate with him. It is not very clear to me what "co-operation" in this case means, but I suppose it means we must give the answers desired by him, not necessarily the truth—at interrogation sessions.

Three prisoners, one after the other, are taken into Mukhwana's room to make a statement and undergo interrogation. No torture. Before any more prisoners can take their turn, the interrogation session is stopped when Mukhwana is called away to go into town. The prisoners are now divided into two groups. Some are taken back to the quarter-guard cells while the rest of us—about six—are taken to what is called "Death-Cell" at the bottom end of Makindye barracks.

From the administrative quarters, Death Cell is about 20 yards behind the Go-Down. The two are separated by two rows of barbed wire. The prisoners are driven with sticks down the path to Death Cell, a dull grey concrete building with corrugated iron roofing.

One of the soldiers opens the metal grille entrance to the cell, lets us in and locks us up again. This one is about 90 feet by 30, and is subdivided into 7 cubicles each of which is separated from the main corridor by a metal grille. It has internal flush toilets but no water; so that the first thing that hits you, yards away from the building, is the stench of urine and human excrement. When you actually enter, your eyes are stung by airborne acid from the urine!

In this pot of filth we find about 180 inmates, most of them reduced to mere skeletons, and all of them so dirty that one can peel off layer after layer of dirt. Their eyes are filled with horror, and it is difficult to imagine a more terrified group of emaciated men. Among these men we take our positions. Even in this group of trapped, scared rabbits a certain social hierarchy is apparent. And, as new prisoners do in every prison, we take our position at the bottom of the social ladder.

On arrival in this cell I am thoroughly dehydrated; I collapse on the floor and start sweating profusely. Other inmates give the only first aid they can, they unbutton my safari jacket and my shirt, and fan me with them. Later, when I have recovered a little, I ask for some water. I am told there is not water anywhere in the cell. I am still lying on my back, and it is about 3:00 p.m.

An old man—well, he is about 55—looks closely at me and is visibly moved. He moves away to a cubicle and brings me a few drops of water in a dirty mess tin. I drink it slowly, but before I finish it an inmate grabs the remainder from me and gulps it down. Other prisoners get hold of him and give him a thorough beating—for robbing "the dead."

After about 30 minutes, I can stand, and even walk about. Mostly I observe life here, trying to discern patterns and rhythms of social order which I know exist, so that I may fit myself into it. As part of my self-education on prison life—I have never been to prison before, not even a police cell—I decide to have a discussion with the kind old man who has given me some water.

He asks me a few questions — why I have been brought here, where from, who by — all of which I answer frankly, despite a nagging fear at the back of my mind that some of the inmates here must be informers and spies of the regime. He then tells me that he, too, has been brought for political reasons. I am shocked by this because this man does not talk like a politician. He does not even know English. Finally I ask him some questions: How does one get anything to eat or drink here? How does one communicate with one's people outside? (From listening to the prisoners I have already gathered that some of them communicate with their people). How does one get medical treatment? How does one get a little corner to sleep in one of the cubicles? How does one get a bath? What is the likely fate of one such as myself? Most of the answers are distressing.

*Food:*

Every two days food is brought to the cell in the form of third-grade, undercooked *posho* (maize meal). Sometimes the food does not come for three days. When it comes it is inadequate, and about half the prisoners do not get anything. There have been numerous cases of death by starvation in the last three months that Ssalongo has spent here. Some food is expected today.

*Water:*

Every two or three days 4 inmates are taken under heavy guard, to a water tap just outside the barracks to draw water for cleaning the lavatories. It is regarded as a great privilege to be one of the four on any day because the water drawers can keep a bit aside for drinking. Ssalongo has some influence with some of the soldiers, and he is often chosen to be one of the water-drawers (which is why he has been able to give me a few drops). But bathing or even washing your hands or face is out of question — even for the water drawers themselves.

*Medical Treatment:*

According to Ssalong, that is a subject I should not even mention in this cell because it has caused the death of at least two people since he came to Death Cell. (Two days after my arrest, his words are given practical proof: a young man is suffering from malaria; he gets some chloroquine tablets smuggled into Death Cell for him; he is reported by one of the regime's spies in the cell; he is collected, taken outside and clubbed to death in our full view, this time he is not even taken to the Go-Down).

*Sleeping Arrangements:*

Ssalongo tells me what I can see for myself — that the cell is terribly over-crowded. There is not enough room for everybody to lie down, so that some inmates must spend the night on their feet! The cubicles are a special privilege which come with status in the hierarchy of the prisoners, subject to vacancies occurring. Vacancies normally occur when some prisoners living in a cubicle are killed off in the Go-Down. Then those who remain in the cubicle invite one or more "stranded" prisoners to fill the vacancies. Until you are so invited you have to be one of the "stranded" ones.

*Communication with Our Families:*

The old man tells me it is strictly forbidden to communicate with the outside world. You cannot communicate with your family. Lawyers are out of question, even priests for dying Roman Catholics! Some prisoners risk and bribe soldiers to take messages to their relations — the bribe being paid at the other end. This is dangerous for both prisoner and relations — as often, after demanding money with menaces from the relatives, the soldiers may kill both prisoner and relatives, to obliterate all evidence of their corruption.

But Ssalongo gives me a bit of cheering news: that he has his own system which he uses for himself alone, and that out of respect for me he would use it to deliver my message. Right now I am not sure whether I am talking to a planted spy or to a genuine friend — but I decide to trust the old man. It is a decision that, later, plays a significant role

in my escape story. Ssalongo tells me, though, that obtaining pen and paper is one of the most difficult problems to solve. There is not, in this cell, even the toilet paper which served as note paper for luminaries such as Nkrumah, Ngugi wa Thiongo and others.

I ask because I want to know and prepare myself for the worst. Ssalongo tells me that once you come to Death Cell, the best you can expect is quick death without torture. Prisoners are collected regularly from Death Cell and taken to be clubbed to death in the Go-Down. Then the day after, prisoners in the so-called Katwe Group of 12 are told to go and load the dead bodies onto an army lorry for disposal in one of the forests.

Ssalongo tells me that occasionally, but only very occasionally, a prisoner in Death Cell has found his way out to freedom by paying large sums of money to key officials in the barracks. However, 95% of such attempts at escape to freedom have ended up in the death of those attempting to get out. More often than not an official will take your money and then kill you to destroy evidence of bribery.

Otherwise the common lot of the inmates of Death Cell is death by clubbing in the Go-Down. If you are not killed in the Go-Down, you may just as easily die of disease or of starvation. Immediately my mind begins to work on ways of avoiding starvation and death by disease, while paving the way for the possibility of escape.

As a first step towards self-preservation, I ask the old man how I can get hold of a mess tin with which I might queue for maize meal (I gather some food is expected today). He tells me one normally has to wait for an inmate to be killed and then struggle fiercely to inherit his mess tin.

The interview is over. It is now about 4:30 p.m. and I can hear some commotion outside. Inmates who have mess tins grab them and rush to take positions in queue. I am told that food is on the way.

But I have no mess tin, and my present physical condition cannot withstand the jostling and pushing in this queue, so I just sit on the side and watch, resigned to not eating for the next two days (in addition to today and yesterday — the day of my arrest). However, Ssalong comes to my aid and brings me a mess tin which, he says, I can use as long as I like. In the course of his three-month stay he has managed to acquire two.

So I take my place at the back of the queue. But somebody recognizes me. It is a young man, a garage owner of Bwaise suburb who has attended a number of my party rallies. He comes and talks to me, and offers to help me obtain some food. He takes my mess tin and enters one of the cubicles. Another young man get out of the cubicle with the mess tin and goes to the head of the queue where *posho* meal is being distributed. My tin is filled, he brings it back and invites me to sit and eat with them in their cubicle. Later I learn that this young man, also from Bwaise suburb, is the "patrone" of Death Cell — the evolved leader of the prison commune who keeps order and dispenses justice in feuds between prisoners.

As soon as I taste the food I feel like throwing up. It is virtually uncooked, has got maggots in it; and there is no salt. However, as I have promised myself not to let myself die of starvation I have to eat it. I shut my eyes and eat without looking.

After eating, the "patrone" gives me a drop of water, and we begin talking. For about an hour I am educating myself with the help of these inmates who, for some reason or other, seem to have a lot of respect for me. Later I learn that a former student in one of my philosophy classes at Makerere University is among the inmates and has told them about me. For weeks while I am here hardly anybody knows my name in Death Cell — they all call me "professor."

At sunset, about 6:30 p.m., I note an ominous silence in Death Cell. I cannot understand it. Nobody wants to speak, or be spoken to. Suddenly I hear the clanking of keys on a chain. Each prisoner is visibly nervous now. A soldier approaching the metal grille to

Death Cell announces his arrival in Swahili: "Nimekuja mimi Muwuaaje" (I, the killer, have arrived). At first I miss the significance of this statement.

The soldier calls out six names. Someone in the main corridor is sobbing. But all six people proceed to the door, which a soldier opens for them. Meek and subdued, like sacrificial lambs, they walk out and the metal grille closes behind them. I shall never forget the faces of those men!

A few minutes later the ritual of torture, whipping, clubbing and cries of agony begins in the Go-Down. Finally the cries subside but the beatings rise to a crescendo and finally stop. We know that the inmates are dead. It is a set ritual that one witnesses many times at Makindye.

When the grisly act has been concluded, there is a visible relaxation of tension in the cell. People resume their conversations from where they had stopped. Others gather at the door to kill off another batch of lice from their clothes, and prepare to spend another night on the filthy floor, or on their feet!

I spent a total of 2 1/2 weeks in Makindye barracks before executing an escape plan. Each of those days was a day of waiting for death, a day of hunger, and a day of witness to untold human suffering. Above all, each day was a day of degradation and dehumanization. Among those killed was the garage proprietor from Bwaise, Laurenti Kate Musoke! A total of between 25 and 30 inmates were killed in these 2 1/2 weeks I was in Makindye — that is from Death Cell alone.

At some point during my stay I was attacked by malaria and a liver complication. I was so ill I could not move on my own. I had to be carried to the toilet by other prisoners. I could not and did not eat anything. I had to break the rule against medical treatment and have a few chloroquine tablets smuggled into jail. I was luckier than many, because I was not caught.

And in those 2 1/2 weeks I discovered that life in Makindye was much worse than Ssalongo had told me on my first day. The details are much more grisly. But some of these details, and details of my escape have to be withheld for the moment.

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## **My Experience in Makindye Military Prison**

### *A Personal Account*

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My name is Evelyn Nyakato. I am a Ugandan national by birth from Mbarara District in the Southern part of Uganda. I am a teacher by profession and was teaching at Kitante Government Primary School in Kampala.

On 26 November, 1981, at about 10:00 a.m. I was teaching in my class—Primary one—when the Deputy Headmaster came to call me from class, looking rather disturbed. This was after five men in civilian clothes, but heavily armed with guns and pistols, had come to the school and to his office asking for me. The five men came to the school, one remaining near their car which they parked near the gate to the school and four of them proceeding to the Deputy Headmaster's office. The five men were under the command of one called Lt. Ochola.

The Deputy Headmaster came with me from my class to his office where I found four of the five men waiting for me. Immediately we entered, Lt. Ochola asked me to say my name. I hesitated, overpowered by fear for my life. He then said in Kiswahili "Otawongeya"—meaning that I was going to have to say.

He then immediately left us under the guard of the other three men and came back with a car—a Fiat Mirafiori, registration number UWT893. He told the Deputy Headmaster that they were taking me to Impala House for questioning in connection with my address, which they found with someone whom they had arrested. Up to that time they had refused to identify themselves. The Deputy Headmaster pleaded with them to wait for the Headmaster but they refused, saying that they had to take me immediately. In the process, the Headmaster arrived. The teachers and schoolchildren had also gathered. He asked for their identities, which they produced. That is where I discovered the group commander's name. I was already very worried that I would not live beyond the hours spent at the school on that day.

Immediately they forced me into their car, which I found full of guns and ammunition. I was told to put my feet over the guns and feel them. They picked up their fifth colleague at the school gate and drove me at full speed to Makindye Military Barracks.

On reaching the barracks the five security men handed me to one Lt. Tom Oyo, who appeared more senior than the three soldiers with him. The other five then left. Lt. Oyo then turned to me and asked, "Why are you here?" I replied that I had no idea why I was brought to the barracks. He then asked me to explain what connection I had with the guerillas. I told him that I had none.



They then all said and insisted that I had. I continued to deny. Lt. Oyo then alleged that I had received a telephone call from Kenya on the day when the "Special Force" had confusion in Kampala and he asked me what I had talked about on that telephone call. I told them that I had not received any telephone call from Kenya at all. He then changed and alleged that I was Museveni's sister and that I was communicating with guerrillas on a radio-call which I had in my house. I replied that as a Primary School teacher I did not need any telephone at my house, let alone a radio-call, and that I did not have a radio-call at any time. As I was asked this and told the other, I continued to worry that they were marking time and arranging to kill me. After my reply on the radio-call question, Lt. Oyo ordered that they put me in a cell, and immediately he ordered, the beatings began.

The first beatings started on my shoulders and head and back, with all the soldiers beating me simultaneously. I soon fell down, bleeding through the cuts caused by the beatings. They then took me to the cell — the "Go-Down" — where they imprisoned those awaiting death. As they kept beating me they also kept asking me where Museveni was. They beat me continuously for two hours until 2:00 p.m. When they took me back to Lt. Oyo, I was bleeding over my whole body from the beatings. As the other two soldiers were beating me and torturing me, the third soldier got hold of my breasts and kept pulling and squeezing them — I had not felt before the kind of pain as I felt when they tortured me in this way.

At 2:00 p.m. while I stood before Lt. Oyo, they brought one George Subwabo, with whom they had found my address. The man identified me — although he did not know my name. He said he knew me as a teacher at Kitante Primary School, and also said that I was his friend.

I also found that I knew him. I told the soldiers that while I knew the man, I did not know his movements. I also told Lt. Oyo that George Subwabo had taken my address to write to me about his child whom he wanted to bring to our school for a place, with my assistance. The soldiers then took George Subwabo away and immediately resumed their tortures. They showed me a number of photographs, including one of Museveni with guerrillas and insisted that I knew him. I told the soldiers that I could only identify Museveni because I had seen him several times on T.V. and in newspapers when he was the Vice-Chairman of the Military Commission. They then returned me to the "Go-Down" Cell until the afternoon of the following day. This was the 27th of November, 1981.

On that afternoon of 27 November, 1981, I had the most shocking experience. They paraded a number of captives in front of the cell, shot dead a number of them, while they shot others in the legs. I was also one of those to be shot and for me, I had already concluded that I was no more. My turn finally came. This time I knew it had come. Lt. Oyo, who had been in charge of the group that was torturing me, handed me over to the Commander of Makindye Barracks, a Lt. Ojera, who immediately asked me the whereabouts of Museveni. I replied as before that I had no knowledge of Museveni's whereabouts.

Without any more hesitation, Lt. Ojera shot at my leg but fortunately missed, very narrowly. He aimed again, but before he could shoot Lt. Oyo got hold of his hand and stopped him and took him aside. They were talking in their mother tongue (Luo) which I did not understand. I understood later that a good Samaritan had come to Lt. Oyo through a timely personal contact by one of the Kitante Primary School parents, whose name I cannot mention for his own safety. When they had finished conferring, Lt. Ojera resumed asking me about the whereabouts of Museveni and other guerrillas. I replied, as I had done before, that I knew nothing. They then resumed torturing me. I was ordered by Lt. Ojera to lie down and receive twelve strokes. While I lay flat, dizzy after receiving the twelve strokes, Lt. Ojera ordered the soldiers to rape me, saying in Swahili "Tomba Yeye."

Fortunately, Lt. Oyo, to whom the Commissioner of Uganda Customs had spoken, was also present. He ordered the soldiers not to carry out the order, but the beating and other tortures continued.

At 5:00 p.m. they returned me to the cell. Lt. Ojera gave an order that they beat me six strokes in the mornings and six strokes in the evenings. This is what was done on the following days—i.e., the 28th and 29th November, 1981.

On 30th November, 1981, a Monday morning, Lt. Oyo ordered all detainees out of their cells. When all of us were out of the cells, we received severe beatings as before. I was singled out and taken to the office to be asked about Museveni's whereabouts. I told them what I had told them before—I did not know the whereabouts of Museveni. After this day and until 11th December, 1981, when I was released from the cell, I received severe beatings in the mornings and evenings. During the period I stayed in the cell, inadequate food, half-cooked and generally badly prepared, was brought once every two or three days. It was also an offence to be seen drinking water, particularly clean water from the tap. You get extra beatings and torture for this.

Then came the most wonderful, unexpected day of hope—the 11th of December. Of course, between November 27th and December 11th, I did not know that the good Samaritan was going to do wonders and obtain my release. At about 1:30 p.m., I was ordered out of the cell to the office of Lt. Oyo and Lt. Ojera. On reaching there, I was asked to make a statement about my relationship with Museveni, George Subwabo, and the guerrillas, with all of whom I told the soldiers that I had no relationship. At this juncture I thought that they were then going to start more serious tortures—which I concluded I could not survive.

I was most fortunately released from the cell and barracks but ordered to report at Makindye every morning before going to teach. I did this until 17th December, 1981, when I managed to escape to a neighboring country.

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